

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: RURAL COMMUNITIES

This is a conversation between Seema (yellow attire) and Babita (Pink attire).

They both live in Peepli village of Rajasthan. Seema has been worried by continuously hearing news about nCovid19. To clear her doubts, Seema decides to meet her friend Babita who is also an ASHA worker.

Let us read the conversation between them.



> Seema: People are killing chickens and other animals; I hear that coronavirus spreads through animals? Is it true?

Babita: No known animal species has been known to carry this virus yet and medical experts have asked people not to believe in rumours and eat non-vegetarian meals if they are prepared with utmost care for hygiene.

> Seema: My neighbours have a big family – they are 8 members. They are running out of soaps. What should they do?

Babita: Do not worry. Just ask them to use ash or sand for cleaning their hands, it works just as good.

> Seema: Rumour is we can get ourselves tested if we donate our blood. Is it right to do that?

Babita: This is not true. One should not donate blood at a time like this unless and until one is absolutely sure that he/she is not infected.

> Seema: With summers approaching, will we be free from the fear of this deadly disease? I hear warm weather kills the virus.

Babita: Summers or warm weather has no impact on the spread of this disease.

> Seema: But.. what about bathing in hot water and gargling with saline warm water?

Babita: No, Seema. These are all myths and have no known impact on the Coronavirus.

> Seema: Villagers are suggesting that we consume alcohol to protect ourselves from the virus. I do not drink – should I be worried?

Babita: There is no evidence whatsoever to prove this claim. I insist on eating healthy meals and exercising instead to maintain strong immunity.

> Seema: If I wear mask, am I safe? Do I have to wear it for the whole day?

Babita: There is no scientific evidence that masks - especially those made at home - protect the wearer from the novel coronavirus. However, in any case – it reduces the chances of the wearer getting unwittingly infected from an asymptomatic patient. You only have to wear it when you are going out of your house or interacting with someone who has visited your house.

> Seema: When I wake up every day these days, I hold my breath for 10 seconds to check myself if I am infected or not. Is it the right way to check myself?

Babita: This is a myth. Dr Faheem Younus, the Chief of Infectious Diseases at the University of Maryland says that a person infected with the novel coronavirus can also hold his/her breath for longer than 10 seconds. On the other hand, the elderly will not be able to accomplish this task, but it does not in any way mean that they are infected.

> Seema: My younger daughter is suffering from mild fever; I am thinking to take her to the hospital. What do you suggest?

Babita: Director of AIIMS, Dr Randeep Guleria says that one should not visit a hospital during a pandemic since it increases the chances of a healthy person catching the virus. One should consult a doctor over the phone if he/she is experiencing any symptoms at all and seek future course of action.

> Seema: Do mosquitos or parcels from China transmit the virus?

Babita: No study or research has shown that mosquitoes can act as carriers of the novel coronavirus. And it cannot spread through parcels received from China.

> Seema: I am in my late 20s and relatively young and healthy. I do not need to strictly follow all the precautionary measures – it affects the elderly, right?

Babita: This is untrue. The transmission of novel coronavirus has been seen in people of all ages. Doctors suggest that people with co-morbid conditions such as blood pressure, heart or respiratory diseases are at a higher risk if they get infected with Covid-19. However, a perfectly healthy person can also be infected in the presence of a Covid-19 patient.